

MEDIA RELEASE

Opera Australia launches Schools Tour in Lismore



Opera Australia is thrilled to announce their New South Wales Schools Tour production *El Kid* will launch at Albert Park Public School in Lismore on Thursday 23 January, 2017.

It is the first time Opera Australia's Schools Tour has launched in a regional centre and also the furthest north the program has ever travelled.

A part of Opera Australia's annual calendar since 1998, The Primary Schools Tour has performed to well over one million students. Giving people of all ages, especially children, the idea that operas come in all shapes and sizes, is proving to be a strong way to develop a foundation of knowledge and interest in opera within the wider community.

Opera Australia's Artistic Director Lyndon Terracini is particularly excited to be launching *El Kid* in Lismore due to his personal connection with the area. In 1993, he founded Northern Rivers Performing Arts (NORPA), which earned a reputation for creating adventurous works that express regional perspectives and contribute significantly to the artistic identity of Australia.

"Taking opera to primary schools across New South Wales strengthens Opera Australia's commitment to being more accessible to our audiences, and a program that we particularly enjoy," said Lyndon. "Lismore holds a special place in my heart and I'm proud to be launching *El Kid* in my old stomping ground."

El Kid toured Victorian schools last year and played a season at Arts Centre Melbourne, to the delight of thousands of children. Overall, this production will be performed over 240 times in more than 145 primary schools to approximately 45,000 children in New South Wales.

Opera Australia has developed this production especially for school students, offering a range of curriculum-based teacher resources to help classes explore classical music using a familiar fairy-tale.

Based on *Three Billy Goats Gruff*, this 50-minute opera using the popular tunes of Bizet's *Carmen*, introduces the drama of opera to primary school students.

In this adaption, *El Kid* is just a kid, but the other goats don't think he's got much to offer. When they all head out to attend Seville's biggest fiesta, no one thinks little Diego will have a part to play. But in opera, it's often the outsider who comes to save the day, and before the party's over, Diego will prove he's no silly goats gruff!

Writer and director, Liesel Badorrek, brings over 20 years of theatre experience to *El Kid*, creating and performing a range of works focused primarily on young audiences and families including the immensely popular *The 26 Story Treehouse*, *Monkeyshines* and *Darlingwood Tales*.

El Kid is fun, satirical, slapstick with colour and movement as well as confronting serious issues of bullying, loneliness, sibling rivalry and is a wonderful production for families, children and teachers.

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About Opera Australia's Schools Tour

Every year, Opera Australia performs to between 70,000 and 80,000 primary school children throughout New South Wales and Victoria.

It's always a big event. Opera Australia arrives at the start of the school day, complete with opera costumes, sets, four singers and a pianist. They need about 40 minutes to set up in the school hall (or any large space), then they are ready to perform.

The schools tour presents up to three performances in a day. Each 50-minute performance is accompanied by 10 minutes of questions and answers with the students and teachers.

Preparation and follow-up is all part of the experience: When teachers book they receive an Opera Australia teacher resource pack. This includes curriculum links, musical examples to play and learn as well as suggestions for classroom extension activities both before and after the visit.

Creatives

Devised by **Liesel Badorrek & Michael**

Badorrek

Director **Liesel Badorrek**

Musical Adaptation **Robert Andrew Greene**

Musical Director **Luke Spicer**

Designer **Mark Thompson**

Cast

Diego **Shoumendu Schornikow**

Troll **Andrew Moran**

Diego / Troll **Jared Lillehagen**

Ferdinand **Ruth Strutt**

Isabella **Danita Weatherstone**

Isabella / Ferdinand **Josephine Grech**

Piano **Antonio Fernandez**

Piano **Benjamin Burton**

Tour Dates

February – September, 2017

Running Time

60 minutes, including a Q&A session

Bookings

Pie Productions

1800 804 707

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